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Tuesday, December 7, 1982



Christmas Time and Christmas Coles

And then there's Dad Letters



by MARTHA WEBER

What poses more of a challenge than five cumulative finals, three papers, and a major presentation all due by the end of exam week? Deciding what to get your Dad for Christmas.

Like studying, the best approach is to begin with organization. And organization often involves classification. So forget what the sociologists say, it's time to stereotype Pop. No matter how much you try to deny it, he is one of two types.

Dear old Dad is either an extravagant, middle-aged version of Miss Piggy who delights in the unnecessary, or he's a straight and narrow believer in the basics. Easy, you say. Just get type 1 a smoking jacket and type 2 a garden hoe. But it's not that simple...there are advantages and disadvantages to each category, which, no matter how carefully analyzed, spell confusion for the frantic December 23rd shopper with fifteen dollars.

Lets begin with type 1. Possible gifts include 14th century classical music tapes, designer aftershave, rhinestone backscratchers, and maybe pen holders for the study.

NOT SO FAST! Take a look around. He has an entire room filled with music tapes, enough cologne to bathe in for a year, and more pen holders than most people have pens. The trouble with the extravagant type is, you aren't the only one aware of their character. People have been showering him with luxuries for years.

Now it's up to you to find something "different" which is defined as "anything he has never seen or heard of in his life." Good luck. And if you're considering that monogrammed Kleenex holder for his car, forget it. Someone's already getting him that.

The "back-to-basics" Dad is no picnic when it comes to shopping either. All he wants is stuff he can put to good use. But don't you feel kind of tacky presenting him with a tube of that white putty which lines the bathtub? Or a set of brand new jumper cables for the family car?

Practical can go too far. So you try to compromise and end up with something personal and practical-like socks. Good idea. It's such a good idea that you and your 12 brothers and sisters have been getting him socks for the past seven years. Back to the drawing board... there's no easy way out.

When all else fails, why not give him something that's already hanging around the house...you. If you have a type-1 Dad, give him an afternoon of art galleries and lunch in a fancy cafe (on you of course). For a type-2 Dad, one afternoon of wood-chopping, snow-shoveling, or house-cleaning. In other words, service with a smile.

Now wasn't that simple?

And best of all, no harrowing gift-wrap decisions!

Congratulations to David Lynch who was recently elected as The Bullet's new Sports Editor. And thanks to all five of the applicants- your enthusiasm was greatly appreciated!

Conforming to the beat of the music

To the Editor:

In response to "Is different music really better than popular music?", I would like to express my sympathy for anyone who thinks that they are free from conformist pressures when they make Top-40 their choice of music. This is clearly not the case.

The music that becomes Top-40 in America today does so because of the airplay that it receives on the radio. Here, people listen and react to the new "hits." But the abundance of Clearasil ads on Top-40 stations betray the fact that the music is geared for young audiences, known for their susceptibility to peer pressure.

Music that scores with this crowd is music that gets repeated airplay and anyone who tries to keep up with what "the American consumer is

buying" becomes locked into a pattern that smacks of conformity and regression to Junior High School.

There is no good Top-40 music, to be sure. This is inevitable, since a good song will sell well despite the pressures of commercial success. Yet the majority of Top-40 is designed exclusively for commercial success to sell records. Perhaps it is not my unwillingness to conform, but my indignation at being treated like a cash supply rather than an appreciative audience, that causes me to seek out music that is different.

Which includes classical music like Bach and Mozart. Yet if to play Bach and Mozart, I will surely be labeled "weird" by the kids bopping to "Get Down On It."

I guess what I'm trying to say is that I feel hurt every time I hear

some new "smash hit" by the Rolling Stones or Fleetwood Mac, and know that there are bands that are working very hard with no recognition. I'm looking for them. Incidentally, Soft Cell, Flock of Seagulls, Stray Cats, The Clash, The Police, The Go-Go's, and a host of other bands would never have made it if weren't for the staunch support of this "new species of music listener America."

Anatole France surely considered Top-40 in saying "if fifty million people say a foolish thing, it is still a foolish thing."

This brings me to Pac-Man. There is something disconcerting about the sheer numbers of kids spending all that money, and all that time addicted to such a pointless and silly occupation as Pac-Man.

Sincerely,

Peter J. LaMarca

It's all a matter of taste

To the Editor:

I feel it is necessary to reply to Chuck Borek's last column "Is Different Music Really Better than Popular Music?" First, I'd like to say that I've got nothing against top 40 hits. As stated in that article, top 40 is merely a reflection of what the American consumer is buying, and I could care less. I even like some Billy Joel, Flock of Seagulls, etc. and The Who are still an excellent live act.

My problem with this column starts with Mr. Borek's attack on new and "different" music. He complains that certain groups "let pseudo-politics or self-importance hinder enjoyment of their music and cites Adam Ant and Duran Duran as examples. If he ever took the time to really listen to these two groups, he wouldn't find a trace of politics or overt sociology in any of their lyrics. These bands simply produce good-time dance music which, incidentally, is considered to be "top 40" in England.

Besides, groups like The Clash and Gang Of Four have proved that you don't have to get boring or unenjoyable to make a political point. "I Love A Man In A Uniform" by Gang Of Four is a classic dance song, yet the lyrics describe the irony of military service.

It makes sense that a heroin-ridden burn-out like Keith Richards would say, "I don't think rock and roll should be analyzed or even thought about deeply." He hasn't had a thought in his head for the last ten years. Rock doesn't always have to be socially significant, but it doesn't have to be void of original ideas either. Mr. Borek accuses progressive music fans of turning off to anything top 40, but it is apparent that he listens to nothing else.

Sincerely,
Stephen Hu
DJ: WMWC

Going well without me

To the Editor:

I was unfortunately "trapped" in the infirmary during the day of the Robert Creely poetry reading, and this left me unable to do a lot of the last-minute things that needed to be done for the event.

But the errands got done, and the reading was successful. I'd like to thank the following people for mak-

ing it all happen: Laura Abenes, Cindy Snyder, Dr. Dan Dervin, Genine Lentine, and Kathleen Hamilton (for emotional support and superb microphone testing).

I apologize if I've forgotten anyone- thanks to all.

Sincerely,
Lisa Ditrch

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mary Washington College's Class Council and Inter-Club Association will be co-sponsoring this year's annual Christmas Bazaar.

The Bazaar will be held Wednesday, December 8 in Ann Carter Lee Ballroom and will be open to the public. It will run from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. with a 25 cents admission charge.

Bazaar participants include students, campus organizations and individuals and merchants from Fredericksburg and area communities.

The Bazaar will offer food and drinks, a cake walk, and pictures with Santa.

Say Merry Christmas to a friend! Circle K will be selling Santagrams in the Dome Room during dinner and in the dorms until Dec. 8.

The Santagram is a felt stocking filled with candy that will be delivered to your friends during Reading Days! For \$1, make a friend happy!

The Bullet

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Fredericksburg VA
22402

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We asked for something new in the Christmas story line, and here are our top winners:

First place--

A Christmas Story

by JACK PIRES

In 1929, the Christmas season approached quietly. Many people found little joy in this particular celebration of the birth of Christ. Some people managed to find happiness at the end of a rope. Most were grateful to be alive. John Mills was one on these. On his way to becoming one of those.

John had spent most of the year drinking. He thought he understood his attachment to liquor, and in the last twenty drunken years had tried several times to unhitch the whiskey wagon, but it proved to be heavy for his weary muscles. The bitter taste of puke was a part of his daily existence. He had come to accept it.

Just as the Salvation Army had come to accept him. He lived there, in his alcoholic solitude, free of charge. Well, not exactly free of charge. They required him to perform some service to the community. And for John, the curtain went up at Christmas. That was when he climbed out of the bourbon bottle and into a red suit and white beard. For hundreds of kids, John Mills became Santa Claus.

He sat upstairs in a huge dusty chair and stayed off the juice for a week. Not one drop. He didn't feel the need. The happiness of anxious youngsters at this time of year was usually more gratifying than any fermented beverage he had ever drunk. The eagerness seemed to gush out of them.

But something was different this season. John could see darkness in the eyes of the smiling children, as a jeweler sees a flaw in a diamond. Their singing was uninspired. Their laughter was edged with desponden-

cy. The feeling that flowed into John was not one of a need being filled. Quite the opposite. Deep inside, a tiny black hole had opened, and as the children filed past, it grew larger. The smile faded behind his long curly beard and his performance became less convincing.

He wondered if the children could sense his loss of enthusiasm. If they did, they never showed it. Maybe they refused to accept the thought. Perhaps their expectation of Santa was too strong. But John wasn't a child. He became more melancholy as the night dragged on. And when the last child left the great hall, the last bit of humor left John Mills. The hole had swallowed him up.

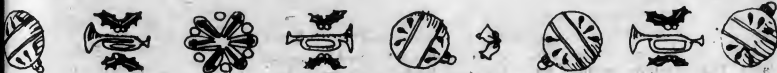
John found his way down the dark stairs to his unmade bed, and he sat on the edge of it. He was confused. This event had become the one certain comfort in his wasted life, and now it had left him feeling as empty as a cloudless evening sky. He reclined on the hard bed and tried to cry, but found that he couldn't. Soon, he fell asleep. The thought of liquor never entered his mind . . .

When John Mills awoke, the first thing he did was to remove the phony whiskers which still adorned his face. That is, he *tried* to. The red cap had come off easily enough, but the ash whiskers seemed to be stuck. Maybe Mrs. Balfour had applied too much glue.

He arose and headed for the bathroom. He felt very heavy, as if he had put on some weight.

Outside, it was still dark, and just then, a light snow began to fall.

see Christmas, page 4



Second place--

The Belligerent Santa

by TONY MARTIN

Chris woke up in the middle of the night to the sound of hoofbeats on the roof. "What are cows doing on our roof?" he thought as he went downstairs. He reached the living room only to find that the fireplace was being wrecked. Soot was falling from up top somewhere. It must be the cows.

Quite unexpectedly, a pair of black boots, followed by a red costume that housed a fat man with red cheeks came from the fireplace. As Chris stared at him, the man coughed and brushed himself off. Then he yelled up the chimney, "Hey Joe. Send down my sack of stuff." A few seconds later, a large sack fell down the chimney, creating a dustcloud of soot that covered the carpet. The man dragged the bag across the floor to the Christmas tree with considerable effort. Then Chris spoke up. "Who are you?", he said loudly.

The small fat man looked over at him and sneered. "Who do I look like, the tooth fairy? I'm Santa Claus, you dolt. Now get out of my way, I have a lot of work to do." He began at once to fill stockings that were hanging by the chimney with care. In one particular stocking, he placed a mousetrap. "That'll teach the little brat to call me a fraud." He looked at Chris, who was just watching the man work. "What do you think you're staring at?" he said, pointing a stubby finger at Chris.

"Nothing, your Imenseness," replied Chris, chuckling to himself. It was hard for him to take such a person seriously.

"If you don't shape up, I'll have my elves, Eric and Eric rough you up a bit. Now watch your step," snorted the Santa.

Chris said, "Yes, sir," grinning all the while. He quickly became inquisitive. "How do you ever keep track of your rounds and letters and stuff?" he asked.

"Computers, of course," replied Santa. "How else

could I do it? If you want to keep up, you have to modernize."

"Do you really fly a sleigh pulled by magic reindeer?" he asked.

"No, I use a Lear Jet. Of course I have a sleigh with reindeer. It wouldn't be kosher if I didn't."

Santa stared up at the Christmas tree and sighed. "What is the world coming to. Plastic trees. I remember when you could brush up against a tree and have fifty percent of the needles fall off." He looked at Chris. "Well? What do you want for Christmas, assuming you deserve something. And don't ask for something like 'Peace on Earth' or 'No more war'. It's enough to make you sick," said the Santa, pausing for a moment. "Only what you can find in the Sear's catalog."

Chris thought for a moment. "How 'bout a puppy dog?" he answered.

The Santa figure sighed. "No originality. Don't you want a G.I. Joe flamethrower or something? How about a Home D-Structo kit? Or maybe a Junior Arsonist playset?"

Chris looked thoughtful. Then he said, "No, I think a puppy dog would be nice. A purple one."

Santa sneered an old wrinkled sneer and dug around in his bag for a minute. We're all out of purple ones, kid. Here's a brown one." He handed a wagging, happy little puppy to an elated youngster. It licked Chris in the face continuously.

"I hope you're satisfied," said the Santa.

"Oh, I am," said Chris, hugging the dog tightly.

"Thank you, Santa."

"Yeah, sure kid." Santa climbed out by way of the chimney, cursing all the way about chimneys being too small these days. Chris watched from the window as Santa guided his reindeer and sleigh to the next house. He let out a giggle when Santa tripped and fell down the neighbor's chimney, head first.

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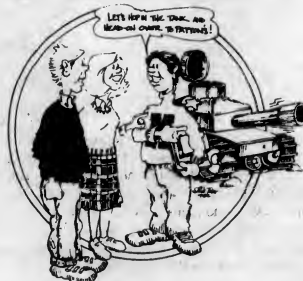
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And a partridge in a pear tree

Their season has come

by **CHUCK BOREK**

The Partridge Family Christmas Album—one seasonal album that has been terminally overlooked by consumers and critics alike. Recorded during the height of the Partridge Family's career, this has got to be the best Christmas album ever produced by a rock group.

David Cassidy's heart-touching rendition of Bing Crosby's "White

vocals by both David and his mom Shirley, cannot help but make you all tingly inside with joy.

Recently, a number of rock guitarists have come to the forefront of the rock industry. We've all grown accustomed to the polished licks of Jimmy Page, Eric Clapton, and Keith Richards. But the incredible talent of cute little Danny Partridge has been overlooked far too long. Sure you haven't heard much from him since the group broke up, but puberty will do that to a guy.

Remember, the Stones may have had their Rock 'n Roll Circus on the BBC, and Elvis and the Beatles had their movies, but how many rock superstars do you recall that had their own weekly television series? The Partridge Family is obviously a group whose time has come.

**** --Chuck

We need a MWC student to coordinate our Ft. Lauderdale trip for spring break. Travel for free! Call Nancy collect (804) 979-8105.

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CHRISTMAS, continued from page 3

John leaned closer to the dirty mirror. The beard was really stuck. He tugged on it, gently at first, and then more determinedly. He could feel it pulling his skin, but it wouldn't come loose. He yanked with two hands, but to no avail. The pain caused his eyes to tear. He was becoming angry, and thoughts became confused. He decided that he'd have to cut it off.

John began a frantic search for a pair of scissors. A labored check under every bed turned up nothing but a few half-bottles of whiskey. He was starting to perspire, and this made him even more agitated. He removed the heavy coat and there he discovered the reason for his discomfort. He still had two pillows under his nightshirt. He pulled up the red cotton thermal, wasn't quite ready for what he saw. The extra padding looked strangely like his own skin. John poked it. Then he grabbed it. It was attached a firm grip to the beard.

This was too much to comprehend. He instinctively reached for one of the bottles, and shaking, brought it to his mouth. The feel of the glass on his usually brought relief, but this time it felt alien. He threw it crashing to the floor.

In his life, John Mills had lost several jobs, two wives, and one small tune. Now he had lost his desire to drink. He thought for certain that he had also lost his mind.

John ran his fat fingers through his snowy beard and across his exposed abdomen. A crooked smile appeared on his face, as he rose and began to gather his belongings into his crimson blanket. He slung the huge sack over his shoulder and headed out the door, while the snow gently fell to Earth.

As he trudged through the quiet night, a young girl, unable to stand, wandered about her small, unlit bedroom. She stopped at the frosted window and peered into the darkness. Something caught her eye.

"Mommy!" she cried excitedly. "Santa lost his cap!"

But her mother didn't hear. She was fast asleep.

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